



Supreme Court of Kentucky

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John D. Minton, Jr.
Chief Justice of Kentucky

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Supreme Court Justice Samuel T. Wright III Formal Investiture Service

Remarks from Chief Justice of Kentucky John D. Minton Jr.
Supreme Court Courtroom, Capitol Building, Frankfort, Kentucky
December 7, 2015

Your predecessor on this Court, Justice Will T. Scott, commented at your swearing-in ceremony last month in Whitesburg that the people of the Eastern Kentucky mountains swelled with pride as you took the oath to become the next justice of the Supreme Court of Kentucky from the 7th Supreme Court District. As Justice Scott said, they swelled with pride because they knew that they were sending one of their own to take the mountains with him to Frankfort.

It must be gratifying that the people who know you best couldn't be prouder of you or more supportive of you as you take your seat on this bench. The area's affection for you was apparent as hundreds of residents from Letcher and surrounding counties gathered in front of the courthouse to be a part of your swearing-in ceremony.

I am certain many in that audience and the audience here today watched you grow up in Letcher County. They know who you are and whose you are because they watched you work your way through high school at your family's country store and through college at a coal tippie. They welcomed you home from the University of Kentucky College of Law when you opened your first law office. And they soon elected you district judge and then in short order approved your appointment as circuit judge by electing you to the circuit bench four times.

Justice Wright, you leave behind the circuit bench where for more than 22 years your success as a trial judge depended on your ability to make important judgment calls with some degree of confidence, in short order and in quick succession, without the burden or luxury of conferring with another judge. As a trial judge, you were on your own.

Today, you leave the trial bench behind, but you bring a deep well of experience with you. That trial court experience has fitted you to be at once a significant contributing member of this Court.

You join a court whose members come from the seven Supreme Court Districts. Like you, we are shaped by our own ideologies and influenced by our individual regional differences. But when we come together in a collegial court, we strive in our decision-making to moderate our regional or ideological preferences.

To be a part of a collegial court means – borrowing the words of the esteemed Judge Harry Edwards – "that judges working on a collegial court engaged in group decision-making have a common interest, as members of the judiciary, in getting the law right, and that, as a result, we are willing to listen, persuade, and be persuaded, all in an atmosphere of civility and respect."

We welcome you as our colleague on this Court and look forward to the months and years ahead in a collective endeavor to get the law right for the people of the Commonwealth we all serve.

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